REMARKS

Claims in the case are 1-9, upon entry of the present amendment. Claims 8 and 9 have been added, and Claims 1-7 have been amended herein.

Claims 1-7 of the above-identified patent application have been amended as to form, for example, by introducing indefinite and definite articles, replacing "characterized in that" with --wherein--, and converting multi-dependent claims to singly dependent claims. Basis for added Claim 8 is found in original Claim 2, and at page 3, lines 24-30 of the specification. Basis for added Claim 9 is found at page 3, lines 10-12 of the specification.

Page 1 of the application has been amended herein to introduce cross reference information. The cross reference information is presented in accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.78(a)(2) (Federal Register / Vol. 65, No. 183 / Wednesday, September 20, 2000; Changes to Implement Eighteen-Month Publication of Patent Applications; Final Rule).

The title of the application has been changed to correspond with that of the related International Patent Publication No. WO 00/52058. The specification has been amended to include section headings. A brief description of the drawing has also been included in the specification, basis for which is found in Figure 1, and at page 4, lines 13-24 of the original specification. The heading of the claims section of the specification has been changed from "Claims" to --WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:--. Basis for the addition of --or oscillating-- prior to "wheels" at line 2, page 3 of the specification is found in original Claim 4. The abstract of the patent application has been replaced, and the new abstract is included herewith on a separate page.

The amendments presented herein are not believed to represent the entry of new matter into the application. Applicants respectfully request entry of this Preliminary Amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSIONS WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION: (Marked-Up)

The following are additions and changes that have been made to the specification.

The title at line 1, page 1 of the specification has been amended as follows.

[A process for producing compacted, free-flowing lacquer raw materials]

METHOD FOR PRODUCING COMPACTED FREE-FLOWING RAW MATERIALS FOR VARNISH

The following has been inserted between lines 1 and 3 on page 1 of the specification.

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED PATENT APPLICATIONS

The present patent application claims the right of priority under 35 U.S.C. 119 and 35 U.S.C. 365 of International Application No. PCT/EP00/01481, filed 23 February 2000, which was published in German as International Patent Publication No. WO 00/52058 on 8 September 2000, which is entitled to the right of priority of German Patent Application No. 199 09 230.3, filed 3 March 1999.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The following has been inserted at line 6 on page 1 of the specification.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The following has been inserted at line 26 on page 2 of the specification.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The paragraph at lines 1-8 on page 3 of the specification has been amended as follows.

It has now surprisingly been found that compacted nitrocellulose can also be obtained by causing the circulating breakers (or oscillating wheels) in a breaker mill,

which breakers travel on a die (plate) which is provided with holes, to press the moistened nitrocellulose through the holes (e.g. bores) in the die (see Figure 1). The nitrocellulose lacquer raw material is thereby compacted. Underneath the die there is a shearing-off apparatus by means of which the granule-like preforms are brought to the desired length. The cross-sectional shape of the preforms is determined by the shape of the hole cross-section.

The following has been inserted between lines 8 and 10 on page 3 of the specification.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

Fig. 1 is a schematic representation of a breaker mill that may be used in the process of the present invention. The reference characters of Figure 1 are summarized as follows: (1) represents the drive shaft; (2) represents a breaker; (3) represents the die with holes; (4) represents the shearing-off apparatus; (5) represents the housing; d represents the bore diameter; l represents the bore length; D_K represents the breaker diameter; B represents the breaker width; and D_M represents the die diameter.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The following lines 13-24 on page 4 of the specification have been deleted.

[Figure 1:

(1): drive shaft
(2): breaker
(3): die with holes
(4): shearing-off apparatus
(5): housing
d: bore diameter
e: bore length
D_K: breaker diameter

Line 1 on page 7 of the specification has been amended as follows.

[Claims] WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

IN THE CLAIMS: (Marked-Up)

The following are versions of the amended claims with markings to show changes made thereto in the present Preliminary Amendment.

1. (Once Amended, Marked-Up) A process for producing compacted free-flowing lacquer raw materials based on nitrocellulose[, characterised in that] comprising pressing [the] lacquer raw material, which is moistened with alcohol or water, [is pressed] through the holes of a die [provided with holes].

2. (Once Amended, Marked-Up) [A] The process [according to claim] of Claim 1[, characterised in that the] wherein said process is carried out at a pressing ratio, P, as represented by the following formula,

$$P = \frac{\text{[length of bore}}{\text{diameter of bore]} } =$$

P = (length of bore) ÷ (diameter of bore)

of from 0.5 – 5.0[, and preferably ranges between 0.5 and 3.0].

3. (Once Amended, Marked-Up) [A] The process [according to either one] of [claims 1 or 2, characterised in that] Claim 1 wherein the lacquer raw material is pressed through the die holes by means of one or more circulating breakers.

4. (Once Amended, Marked-Up) [A] The process [according to either one] of [claims 1 or 2, characterised in that] Claim 1 wherein the lacquer raw material is pressed through the die holes by means of one or more oscillating wheels.

5. (Once Amended, Marked-Up) [A] The process [according to any one] of [claims 1 to 4, characterised in that] Claim 1 further comprising [the compacted lacquer raw material is sheared] shearing off the compacted lacquer raw material, below the die, into pieces of [the desired] selected length.

5. (Once Amended, Marked-Up) [A] The process [according to any one] of [claims 1 to 4, characterised in that] Claim 1 further comprising [the compacted lacquer raw material is sheared] shearing off the compacted lacquer raw material, below the die, into pieces of [the desired] selected length.

6. (Once Amended, Marked-Up) [A] The process of Claim 1 wherein [for producing] the lacquer raw material[s in the form of granules, characterised in that the nitrocellulose, which is moistened with water or alcohol and which is used as the lacquer raw material,] has a nitrogen content $\leq$ 12.6 %.

7. (Once Amended, Marked-Up) A compacted[,] free-flowing lacquer raw material based on nitrocellulose[, obtainable] prepared by [a] the process [according to any one of claims 1 to 6] of Claim 1.

8. (Added) The process of Claim 2 wherein said pressing ratio P is from 0.5 to 3.0.

9. (Added) The process of Claim 1 wherein the compacted free-flowing lacquer raw material has a moisture content of at least 25 %.